SPECIAL ISSUE

Sheffield TIMES

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Community News for Sheffield & Ashley Falls, MA SECOND GENERATION **Special Election Supplement** April 2008

TOWN MEETING MAY 5, ELECTIONS MAY 12

Sheffield's 2008 annual town meeting will be held at 7pm on Mon., May 5, at Mt. Everett Regional High School. All Sheffield residents are welcome at the meeting, but only registered Sheffield voters can vote.

The meeting will vote on more than 30 articles. Here are highlights:

One article (#8) would make positions for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District's School Committee elected, not appointed. A related article (#9) provides for the Town Moderator to make interim appointments to the committee. Citizens' petitions added these to the warrant. The other four towns in the district are voting on making the committee elected, too.

The town will be asked to approve the budget for both the town and the school, along with several equipment requests. See the budget highlights story on page 2.

Some articles concern changes to town boards and commissions. One (#30) would establish a Housing Commission. Another (#31) would give the Zoning Board of Appeals five members and one associate instead of three members and three associates. Another (#29) would add associate positions to the Conservation Commission.

Several items (articles #32 through #34) clarify and amend Sheffield's zoning by-laws. See page 6 for a summary. The Planning Board will have a voter information sheet availalble at the meeting.

This year, for the first time in recent memory, budget item breakdowns are being made public. See the box on page 6.

The text of the warrant is below.

Town elections

The town elections will be held on Mon. May 12, 9am-7pm, at Town Hall. Absentee ballots are available from the Town Clerk that allow voting up to noon on May 9. Call the Town Clerk at 229-7000 x 151 if you have questions.

This year, candidates for Board of Selectmen, Moderator and Library Trustee are running unopposed. No one had filed papers for the vacant. Planning Board position in time to be on the ballot. There may be a write-in candidate. The *Sheffield Times* runs profiles of declared candidates on the ballot; see page 7.

Also on the ballot will be an article approving $100,000 in property taxes in excess of the 2½ percent limit. See the budget highlights on page 2.

This issue, a service to the town by the Sheffield Association, publisher of the Sheffield Times, is mailed to all Sheffield residents. The next regular issue, May/June 2008, will be available as usual at local stores, the Library, Town Hall, the Senior Center, the transfer station, and other distribution points.

The Sheffield Association mails this special issue to the whole town as a community service. We rely on contributions to pay for printing and mailing. See the back cover for how you can help.

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WARRANT FOR SHEFFIELD'S 2008 TOWN MEETING

To the Constables of the Town of Sheffield in said County of Berkshire, Greeting:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the Inhabitants of the Town of Sheffield, qualified to vote in Town affairs, to meet in the auditorium of the Mt. Everett Regional High School on Berkshire School Road in Sheffield on Monday, May 5, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. for the following purposes:

ARTICLE I: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, and/or transfer from available funds, such sums of money as listed below, and as may be amended, necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for Fiscal Year 2009, or take any other action relative thereto.

Moderator.	$200	Police Department	$416,669	American Legion	$1,200
Selectmen's Office	$156,754	Fire Department	$39,955	Care of Soldiers' Graves	$1,400
Board of Assessors	$91,007	Inspectional Services	$75,000	Ashley Falls Historic District Commission	$100
Treasurer/Collector	$145,124	Fire Hydrants	$7,942	Agricultural Commission	$500
Town Clerk	$54,046	Dog Officer	$8,500	Interest on Loans	$1
Elections & Registration	$20,570	Highway Department	$544,400	Berkshire County Retirement	$159,931
Conservation Commission	$9,430	Streetlights	$10,500	Worker's Compensation	$18,500
Planning Board	$11,000	Board of Health	$14,334	Unemployment Compensation Fund	$1
Industrial Development Comm.	$100	Visiting Nurse Association	$3,096	Group Health (32B) Insurance	$265,000
Zoning Board of Appeals	$2,000	Council on Aging	$48,810	Employer Medicare	$16,000
Town Buildings and Properties	$92,510	Veterans Benefits	$1,000	Financial Audit	$12,000
Town Report & Communications	$5,500	Library	$152,664	Insurance & Bonding	$67,000
Legal Services	$15,000	Historical Commission	$100		
Dispatch Services	$7,380	Memorial Day	$750		

Continued on page 3

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Sheffield TIMES

Community Newsletter for Sheffield & Ashley Falls, MA

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Working since 2001 to foster communication among the people, businesses, and organizations of Sheffield and Ashley Falls

Photo credits: John Wightman, page 7

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROPOSED BUDGETS

Town operations to increase by 4.5%

Voters at the Sheffield town meeting will be asked to approve the town's proposed operating budget of $2.47 million, a 4.5 percent increase over last year. The increase is mostly due to increases in employee compensation and related costs.

The overall budget increase, including the town's share of the school budget and articles approving specific expenditures, is 10 percent. Equipment to be voted on includes $350,000 for a new fire truck and $145,000 for a new plow truck. (Money set aside in previous years will pay for most of the fire truck.)

The new estimated tax rate if all warrant items are adopted would be $12.57 per $1,000, as compared with the current rate of $11.74 per $1,000. For a property with an assessed valuation of $100,000, that would be an increase of $83 a year; for a valuation of $250,000, $207 a year.

The total town budget, including town departments and school costs, to be voted on is $7.8 million, an increase of 5.9 percent.

School budget OKed by state

Sheffield's share of the FY2009 school budget to be voted on at Town Meeting is up 6.5 percent from FY2008. The share was calculated according to the statutory method by the state Dept. of Education.

The Commissioner of Education directed the treasurer of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District to present a $14,985,438 school budget for fiscal year 2009 to the towns. The state took the action in a letter dated April 3.

The budget is what 6 of the 10 School Committee members approved at the committee's meeting on Feb. 6. The three (of four) Sheffield members present at the meeting voted against the proposal. Because only six committee members had approved it, the commission was required to step in. State law requires that a school budget be approved by at least a two-thirds margin—seven members of a 10-member committee.

The five towns in the district—Alford, Egremont, Monterey, New Marborough and Sheffield—will present the budget to their voters at their annual town meetings in early May. If four of the five towns vote in favor, the budget will become final.

If two or more towns fail to approve the school budget, the commissioner could send it back to the school committee to see if at least two-thirds of the members could agree on a reduced budget. That budget would then be resubmitted to town voters. Alternatively, the commissioner could declare the current proposed budget to be the official budget.

Before the Feb. 6 meeting, the school superintendent and the School Committee's finance subcommittee had tentatively agreed to a lower budget. At a later meeting, the six non-Sheffield committee members voted to approve a budget that was $100,000 higher, apparently in response to complaints from parents and teachers about staff cuts that would have been required were the smaller budget to be adopted.

An item on the Monterey town warrant—its town meeting will be held on May 3—would close its underutilized kindergarten. This school currently has one teacher, one teacher's assistant and a handful of students. Shutting it down would produce around $145,000 in annual cost savings for the school district.

SBRSD proposed FY2009 budget

		% change from FY2008
Operating and transportation budget	$12,896,086	+ 5.5%
Capital budget	$2,089,350	- 2.5%
Total budget	$14,985,438	+ 4.3%

Proposition 2½ on ballot for May 12

Massachusetts' so-called Proposition 2½ requires voters to explicitly approve a rise in property taxes that exceeds 2½ percent. This year, Sheffield's budget goes over the 2½ percent limit by $100,000: $75,000 of it attributable to the school budget, and $25,000 to a downward adjustment in Sheffield's projected growth due to the slowing economy.

Accordingly, voters in the town election on May 12 will see an override measure on the ballot. It would be the town's first override vote since the early 1990s. The $100,000 represents about 18 cents per $1,000 of assessed valuation.

If Sheffield needs an override, New Marlborough will probably need one too. The need could be obviated if Monterey's town meeting votes to close its kindergarten. —*Peter Rowntree*

WARRANT, *continued from page 1*

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to fix the compensation of the following elected officers of the Town for Fiscal Year 2009, as required by Chapter 41, Section 108 of the General Laws: Moderator $200; Selectman, Chairman $2,200; Selectmen, two members at $1,900 each, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, a sum of money for the disposal and management of solid waste, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to approve the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2009 and vote to raise and appropriate $5,083,088 to pay the Town's assessed share of that budget under the statutory formula enumerated in Chapter 71, Section 16B of the General Laws, said appropriation to be contingent on passage of a Proposition 2½ override in the amount of $100,000.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to approve the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2009 and vote to raise and appropriate $202,731 to pay the Town's assessed share of that budget.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $800 to pay the stipend for Sheffield's committee members of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District for Fiscal Year 2009, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $51,000 to pay for vocational education tuition in Fiscal Year 2009, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 8: (Submitted by Petition) To see if the town will vote to elect Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee members with residency requirements in district-wide elections to be held at the biennial state elections beginning at the earliest possible date by amending the SBRSD Regional Agreement by striking the entire section under, '2. THE COMMITTEE.' and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

> "'The powers and duties of the District shall be exercised by and vested in a Regional District School Committee, (hereinafter referred to as the Committee). The Committee shall consist of 10 members with residency requirements as follows: one from Alford, two from Egremont, one from Monterey, two from New Marlborough and four from Sheffield.
>
> a) Pursuant to MGL c 71 § 14E, members shall be elected in biennial state elections in 2008 or no later than 2010 by way of district-wide elections with residency requirements, which will result in the required number of members who are residents of the appropriate town, to serve for a term of four years and thereafter until their respective successors have been duly elected and qualified. For the purposes of arrangement on the ballot, offices having the same residency requirement shall appear on the ballot distinct from offices having different residency requirements, provided always that there shall appear on the ballot appropriate instruction to the effect, 'you may vote for every position on the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Committee, regardless of where you live in the District.'
>
> b) Transition from current appointive members to elective members shall be reached by continuing each Town's appointive process until elected member successors have been duly elected and qualified. In order to manage this transition, all current and any future appointive members of the school committee will have terms that cannot extend beyond the time elective successors would be duly elected and qualified.
>
> c) To fill member's positions vacated prior to the end of members elected terms, each town shall establish locally elected officials to act as appointive authority pursuant to MGL c 71 § 14E (5).
>
> d) If any vacancy occurs among appointed or elected members after acceptance of this amendment, the appointive authority for school committee members in the town so affected and the remaining Committee member(s) of the town affected, acting jointly, shall appoint a member to serve until the next biennial state election, at which election a successor shall be elected to serve a full four year term. If any vacancy occurs in a town with only one member, the appointive authority from the town involved shall appoint a member to serve until the next biennial state election, at which election a successor shall be elected to serve a full four year term."

ARTICLE 9: (Submitted by Petition) To see if the Town will vote for town representatives to the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee to be appointed by the Town Moderator in accordance with Section 2, Article a of the existing Regional Agreement and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 14E until such time as town representatives are elected with residency requirements in district-wide elections to be held at the biennial state elections in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 14E, and to continue as appointive authority when necessary thereafter, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Health to employ any of its members, including members who also serve on the Board of Selectmen, as Title 5 Witnesses for Septic Systems Evaluation Tests and Inspections at a rate of $35.00 per inspection, and/or Sanitation (Title 5) Inspector at an annual salary of $500 for Fiscal Year 2009, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the appointment of members of the Board of Selectmen to any office or position under their supervision at no additional compensation in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 268A, Section 21A of the General Laws, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from Overlay Surplus, and/or transfer from available funds, $55,000 to provide for extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures under the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 6 of the General Laws, known as the Reserve Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer/Collector to sell, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, any parcel or parcels of real estate which have been or may be acquired through the foreclosure of tax title, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds, $30,053 to pay principal and interest on the bonded indebtedness authorized by Town Meeting vote of January 30, 1995, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $18,000 to purchase new turnout gear for the Fire Department, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to transfer $350,000 from available funds to purchase a new fire truck, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $750 to the Emergency Response Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $7,500 to purchase up to date information technology hardware, software, and services, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $11,500 to purchase a new commercial grade mower and trailer for the Highway Department, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $145,000 to purchase and equip a new plow truck for the Highway Department, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to accept funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the provisions of Chapter 90 of the General Laws, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair, and construction of Town ways and bridges, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $9,500 for improvements to the Town Hall Parking Lot, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 23: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $8,500 for legal, advertising, and related costs to process tax delinquent accounts, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings Account for FY2008, $5,000 for a new trash compactor receiver box, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, $5,000 for commercial personal property tax appraisal consultant services for the Board of Assessors, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town will vote to accept Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 54 and establish the minimum value of personal property subject to taxation at $1,000., or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 27: To see if the Town will vote to accept Chapter 32B, Section 18 of the General Laws which will require that all retirees, their spouses and dependents who are enrolled in Medicare Part A at no cost to a retiree, their spouse or dependents, or eligible for coverage thereunder at no cost to a retiree, their spouse or dependents, be required to enroll in a medicare health benefits supplement plan offered by the Town, except that any retiree who has formally retired prior to July 1, 2008 shall not be bound by this article, or take any other action relative thereto.

ARTICLE 28: To see if the Town will vote to pay the following prior year bills from appropriate FY2008 departmental budgets, or take any other action relative thereto: A-1 Security - $881.00; Master Garbologist - $130.00

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town will vote to petition the legislature, under the provisions of Section 8, Article 89 of the Amendments to the Constitution (Home Rule), to enact the following, or take any other action relative thereto:

Nothwithstanding the provisions of any general or special law to the contrary, the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Sheffield may appoint two associate members of the Conservation Commission for terms not to exceed one year. The Chairman of the Conservation Commission may designate any such associate member to sit on the Commission in the absence of a quorum for any reason, including a conflict of interest, or in the event of a vacancy on the Commission until said vacancy is filled in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 8C of the General Laws.

ARTICLE 30: To see if the Town will vote to establish a permanent Housing Commission to support and encourage the creation of sufficient workforce housing in Sheffield as provided in the following, or take any other action relative thereto:

Said Commission, once appointed, shall develop a work plan to carry out the following primary tasks:

Review existing bylaws and provide recommendations that promote workforce housing in Sheffield.

Identify and prioritize appropriate areas for new housing to complement the recommendations of the Open Space Five Year Action Plan.

Utilize a regional approach to meeting housing needs in Sheffield in order to access resources and funding not readily available to small towns.

The Commission shall consist of five (5) members and two (2) alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Members should represent a variety of different interests including beneficiaries of the Commission's efforts, community members with relevant expertise, civil engineer, landscape designer, land use planner, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, or real estate agent. Members shall be residents.

Members will serve a staggered three-year term. Two (2) members shall be appointed for a term of three years; Two (2) members shall be appointed for a term of two years and three thereafter; and one (1) member for a term of one year and three thereafter. Alternates shall serve for a term of one (1) year.

The Board of Selectmen shall fill any vacancy based on the unexpired term of the vacancy in order to maintain the cycle of appointments, based on the recommendation of the Commission.

ARTICLE 31: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning By-Laws as follows, or take any other action relative thereto:

Delete Section 9.2.1 Establishment in its entirety and replace therewith the following language: "9.2.1 Establishment. The Zoning Board of Appeals shall consist of five regular members and one associate member. All members shall be appointed and removed by the Board of Selectmen pursuant to MGL c.40A, s.12. The Board shall elect a chairman and clerk. The chairman may designate an associate member to represent any regular member during that member's absence. In such instance, an associate member shall have and exercise full voting rights of the absent member."

ARTICLE 32: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning By-Laws as follows, or take any other action relative thereto:

1. Add the following terms to Section 10, Definitions:

Business or professional office, individual: A single business establishment (profit or non-profit) engaged in providing professional or business services including legal, insurance, engineering, surveying, accounting, architectural, management, consulting, counseling, secretarial, appraisal, research, marketing, sales, advertising, design, financial advisory, tax advisory, personnel hiring and management, computer and real estate brokerage and similar services and/or the office of a member of a recognized profession maintained for the conduct of that profession. Business or professional office, individual shall not involve manufacturing, fabrication, production, processing, assembling, cleaning, testing, repair, or storage of materials, goods, or products, which are physically located on the premises, or any service provided to animals, such as a veterinary hospital, or any medical and dental offices and clinics, other than psychiatric or mental health services. (Refer to Health Care Facility Section 3.1.3.C.3)

Health care facility: A facility or institution, whether public or private, principally engaged in providing services for health maintenance and the treatment of mental or physical conditions. Health care facilities include but are not limited to general or special hospitals, public health centers, diagnostic centers, medical offices, dental offices, treatment centers, rehabilitation centers, extended care facilities, long term care facilities, residential health care

facilities, home health agencies, clinics and dispensaries. They may include laundries, cafeterias, gift shops, and laboratories as accessory uses.

Certificate of occupancy: A certificate signed by the Building Inspector in accordance with the State Building Code 780-CMR setting forth either that a building or structure complies with the Zoning By-Laws or that a building, structure or lot may lawfully be employed for a specified use or uses, or both.

2. Add the following definition to Section 10, Definitions, and Section 3.2.8:

Accessory single-family dwelling unit / General Business District: A Single-family dwelling unit as an accessory use where the principal use is either a use allowed by right or permitted by Special Permit in the General Business District, per Section 3.1.3 Table of Use Regulations.

3. Change the definition of "Accessory Single-Family Dwelling Unit / Commercial District", Section 10, Definition , and Section 3.2.7 to read:

Accessory Single-Family Dwelling Unit / Commercial District: A Single-family dwelling unit as an accessory use where the principal use is either a use allowed by right or permitted by Special Permit in the Commercial District, per Section 3.1.3 Table of Use Regulations.

ARTICLE 33: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning By-Laws as follows, or take any other action relative thereto:

1. Change Section 3.1.3.C.3 to read:

Principal Use	District				Notes
	R	VC	C	GB	
C. Instutional Uses					
3. Health care facility	PB	PB	PB	PB	Refer to Section 9.4 for Special Permit requirements.

2. Change Section 3.1.3.D.3 to read:

Principal Use	District				Notes
	R	VC	C	GB	
C. Commercial Uses					
3. Bed and breakfast establishment; guest house; inn	Y	Y	PB	PB	Refer to Section 10, Definitions. Refer to Section 9.4 for Special Permit requirements.

3. Delete Section 3.1.3.D.13, Hotel, inn; Renumber as needed; and Change Section 3.1.3.D.17 to read:

Principal Use	District				Notes
	R	VC	C	GB	
D. Commercial Uses					
17. Hotel, motel	N	N	PB	PB	Refer to Section 10, Definitions. Refer to Section 9.4 for Special Permit requirements.

4. Change Section 3.1.3.D.11 to read

Principal Use	District				Notes
	R	VC	C	GB	
D. Commercial Uses					
11. Funeral home	N	PB	PB	PB	Refer to Section 10, Definitions. Refer to Section 9.4 for Special Permit requirements.

5. Add the following as Section 3.1.3.G.5 and Renumber as needed:

Principal Use	District				Notes
	R	VC	C	GB	
D. Accessory Uses					
5. Accessory single-family dwelling unti/General Business District	N	N	N	PB	Refer to Section 3.2.8. Refer to Section 9.4 for Special Permit requirements.

ARTICLE 34: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning By-Laws as follows, or take any other action relative thereto:

1. Add the following terms to Section 9.3.7 Lapse:

2. Special Permits: According to the provisions of MGL c 40A § 9, any special permit granted by the Planning Board shall lapse within 2 years, which shall not include such time required to pursue or await the determination of an appeal, as per MGL c 40A §17, from the grant thereof, if a substantial use thereof has not sooner commenced except for good cause or, in the case of permit for construction, if construction has not begun by such date except for good cause.

2. Change the last paragraph of Section 6.2.5 to read:

The Board may not grant a Special Permit for any sign of a size more than 50% larger than that permitted under Section 6.2.5.1 above or for more than four signs to be placed upon any lot. Further, the Board may not grant a Special Permit for a combined square footage of all signs exceeding 50 square feet. Applicants for a Special Permit shall submit a drawing acceptable to the Board illustrating the proposed sign(s), their location on the property and their conformance to setback requirements.

ARTICLE 35: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning By-Laws as follows, or take any other action relative thereto:

1. Add the following to Section 3.1.3.A.5, Boarding house, Notes:

Refer to Sections 3.2.6.2, 4.2.2.3, 4.3.2.5 and 7.3.

2. Add to Section 4.3.3:

6. Applicants for a Special Permit under this Section shall first file for the Special Permit. If granted, applicant shall promptly record the Special Permit as specified in the Planning Board Rules and Regulations.

7. The Planning Board shall have the right to waive Approval Not Required Plan (Form A) fees for applicants under this Section in accordance with the Planning Board Rules and Regulations.

3. Add the following as the fourth sentence in Section 9.1.1, Permits:

A building or structure shall not be occupied until the Building Inspector has issued a Certificate of Occupancy, which certifies compliance with all applicable by-laws and laws.

4. Delete the phrase "Section 6.1. Signs" from Section 9.5.1.1.2; so that it now reads:

For other information regarding Special Permits, refer to Section 9.4 Special Permits, and as appropriate, Section 4.3.3, Alternative Lot Dimensions; Section 5.2, Nonconforming Uses and Structures; Section 7.1, Personal Wireless Service Facilities, Repeaters and Towers; Section 8.1 Adult Entertainment Overlay District; and Section 8.3, Water Supply Protection District.

5. Add the following sentence to Section 9.5.3, Contents of Site Plan:

To insure that the information presented in an applicant's site plan is consistent with the use being applied for, the SPGA shall have the right to waive or modify any component listed under

Site Plan Content, at the written request of the applicant, where it is clear such modification or waiver will not materially impact the information presented or required by the SPGA to conduct its business. Any such approval given by the SPGA to a modification or waiver request shall be by the same number of votes as required to approve a Special Permit.

You are also directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Sheffield, qualified to vote in Town elections, to meet in the Town Hall on Depot Square in Sheffield on Monday, May 12, 2008 at 9:00 AM then and there to bring in their votes for the election of the following Town Officers:

One Moderator for one year

One Selectman for three years

One Library Trustee for three years

One Planning Board member for three years

And to decide on the following question: "Shall the Town of Sheffield be allowed to assess an additional $100,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Operating Budget Assessment for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008?"

Yes ____ No ____

All of said officers to be voted for on the official ballots furnished at the polls. The polls will be opened at 9:00 AM and closed at 7:00 PM.

You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting an attested copy in seven public places in the Town, not less than seven days before the date of said meeting.

Hereof Fail not, and make return of this Warrant to the Town Clerk, with your doings thereon, at or before the time of said meeting.

Given under our hands and the Seal of the Town of Sheffield this twenty-second day of April in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Eight.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

Julie M. Hannum

James T. Collingwood, Sr.

David D. Macy

PLANNING BOARD WARRANT ARTICLES

The Planning Board proposes for voter consideration:

- Article 32, which adds or changes definitions for uses and terms: "individual business or professional office," "health care facility," "certificate of occupancy," "accessory single-family dwelling unit/General Business District," "accessory single-family dwelling unit/Commercial District."
- Article 33, which proposes changes to four current uses and adds a new accessory use.
- Article 34, which seeks to clarify the lapse of special permits and correct a typographic error in signage special permits.
- Article 35, which proposes changes to make the by-laws easier to use or allow the Planning Board to waive site-plan requirements when requested and warranted.

In addition, Article 31, proposed by the Town Administrator to increase the Zoning Board of Appeals to five members and one alternate (from three members and three alternates), is on the warrant under the Planning Board purview.

The Planning Board will have a voter information sheet available with full discussion of these articles its recommendations at Town Meeting on May 5.

SOME NUMBERS BEHIND THE NUMBERS

As in most towns, the largest budget line in Sheffield's proposed budget is for the schools (see page 2 for more on that). The second largest town expense is the Highway Dept. Not only does that department have sizeable staff, it has to purchase road-maintenance materials. The budget to be voted on at Town Meeting on May 5 includes $75,000 for salt, $36,000 for sand, $27,500 for gravel and $40,000 for asphalt.

Those glimpses into the numbers behind the numbers are available to voters this year in the "budget detail" document posted at the Sheffield town web site at www.sheffieldma.gov. (Click on "Recent Headlines" and follow the link.) You can also get a copy of the numbers at Town Hall. Town Administrator Joe Kellogg says he will be happy to answer any questions.

The warrant itself lists the amount being budgeted for town departments, as you can see on page 1. In most departments, staff costs account for most of the amount to be appropriated. Salaries for Sheffield's town workers range from $7.76 an hour for the assistant to the Senior Center Director to $80,000 a year for the Town Administrator. At Town Meeting, Kellogg plans to make the 2007 town salaries available as a handout.

Beyond salaries, medical insurance and pension contributions are another large expense, accounting for about $425,000 of the proposed FY2009 budget.

Many town positions, including most of the Fire Dept. and most boards and commissions, are held by unpaid volunteers or volunteers who receive just a small stipend. For instance, Rick Boardman, the fire chief, will receive this year for the first time a stipend of $2,400, an amount in line with what other town fire chiefs are paid.

Other significant expenses in running the town of Sheffield include running its vehicles: $22,500 for Police Dept. gas and vehicle maintenance; $12,000 for Fire Dept. vehicle maintenance; and $30,000 for Highway Dept. gas and vehicles. The FY2009 budget also includes $23,169 for Library books and publications.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE IN THE TOWN ELECTIONS!

Voting will take place Monday, May 12, 9am to 7pm at Town Hall. Or you can pick up an absentee ballot from the Town Clerk and vote anytime up to noon on Friday, May 9. Absentee ballots that are mailed in must be received by close of polls on May 12.

CANDIDATE PROFILES

Board of Selectmen
Term: Three years
Candidate: Julie Markham Hannum
Seats open: One

Julie Markham Hannum is running for her second term on the Board of Selectmen.

She is a life-long resident of Sheffield. Married to Steve Hannum, she has two children, Philip, in his second year at Rochester Institute of Technology, and Robin, who currently lives and works in the Boston area. Julie graduated from Westfield State College and received a Masters in Education from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She is employed as a Program Director for Berkshire Community College developing partnership projects among county high schools, BCC and local businesses that promote student success.

Julie has long been active in the community. In addition to serving on the Board of Selectmen, she is currently a member of the Board of Health, the Master Plan Implementation Advisory Committee, the new Technology Access Committee, the ad hoc Parking Lot committee and the Economic Development Task Force. Previously, she served as trustee for the Bushnell-Sage Library Board for 13 years, 11 of them as its chair. She is also a trustee at Old Parish Church, recently completing six years of service as church moderator. She is a long-time member of the Sheffield Grange.

Julie is registered as unenrolled. She is seeking a second term to continue her effort to make a difference in town government. She says, "I have learned so much about town operations and management over the past three years—it would be a shame to waste that knowledge on one term. I guess you could say I'm hooked on public service. We have a terrific bunch of town employees and volunteer board and committee members who work very hard to keep the town running smoothly and in a professional manner. It's a pleasure to serve the Town of Sheffield."

Julie is excited that the Village Green Improvement Project will finally be completed this summer and the Town Parking Area this fall. She finds it rewarding to see the progress with the Master Plan, including updated zoning by-laws, work on the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, creation of a small park at the Old Covered Bridge with the town's first public access area to the Housatonic River, the proposed creation of a Housing Commission, state and regional progress in bringing broadband Internet service to all businesses and households and development of an economic strategy to make Sheffield a more "business-friendly" community. "Through community efforts we will also see an expanded firehouse in the near future," she says.

The biggest challenges that Julie identifies for the future include 1) balancing the town's ability to maintain and enhance town services while minimizing property tax increases; 2) identification of a potential new home for the Highway Dept.; and 3) the eventual negotiation of a new regional school agreement. She notes that budget decisions get more difficult each year. The Highway Garage needs attention, and many think we should look for a new site in the interest of protecting our town water supply. She believes that discussions on a new regional school agreement need to begin soon as "this process will require extensive time, patience, negotiation and deliberation with our district partners and neighbors as we seek broader collaboration that will be in the best interest of all of our towns."

Library Trustee
Term: Three years
Candidate: Katherine G. Ness
Seats open: One

Katherine Ness has served as a library trustee since July 2007, when she was appointed to fill the seat vacated by Peter Rowntree. She has lived in the Berkshires since she and her husband, John James, bought a weekend house in Sheffield in 1977. They have lived here full-time since 1986.

Kathie is a graduate of Vassar College. She has worked in the book publishing industry for over 30 years, most of that time as a freelance copy editor of nonfiction books, which she continues to do today. She is a past president of the Sheffield Historical Society and is actively involved in community projects in Ashley Falls, helping to organize events such as the village Memorial Day celebration and holiday tree lighting.

Kathie has always loved libraries, tracing her interest to wonderful experiences with them as a child. She thinks of libraries as "Treasure Troves," always offering new surprises. "If I hadn't gone into publishing," she says, "I would have become a librarian."

Kathie's goal as a trustee is to see that the Bushnell-Sage Library continues to do the best job it can of serving the community as a center for reading and discovery, learning, information, research—and fun. That includes staying open as many hours as possible within Sheffield's budget constraints; helping to maintain adequate staffing, also within budget constraints; working on a landscape master plan; continuing programs such as author readings, joint programs with the Historical Society, Senior Center, Trustees of Reservations and other organizations; supporting children's programming—our most important audience in many ways—with story times, half-day programs, summer reading programs, and the like; and working with the Friends of the Library on projects such as the book sale and Local Authors Day.

Town Moderator
Term: One year
Candidate: Bruce Person
Seats open: One

Bruce Person has served as Sheffield's Town Moderator for the last 16 years.

Born in Meriden, CT, Bruce graduated from the University of Connecticut at Storrs in 1965 and Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in 1969. He came to Sheffield in 1971 after serving in the Air Force for two years and has lived here ever since. He established his dental practice in Great Barrington and was in the same office for 32 years. He has two adult sons who live out of the area.

Bruce is a former chairman of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee, a former trustee of Berkshire School, and former president of the Great Barrington Rotary Club. He also was founder and past president of their Student Assistance Fund. He is currently a town constable and a director of Legacy Banks. Now in retirement, he enjoys extensive travel.

Bruce looks forward to the Town's Annual Meeting and tries to moderate it "in a non-confrontational way," respecting all opinions. "It is my aim," he says, "that everyone goes home a friend."

DO YOUR PART!

TOWN MEETING: MAY 5, 7pm at Mt. Everett Regional High School

TOWN ELECTIONS: MAY 12, 9am-7pm at Town Hall

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